

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed on November 3, 2005, and is accompanied by a Petition for 2-Month Extension of time to extend the due date to April 3, 2006. Reconsideration of the claims with an eye toward allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant acknowledges that claims 1-3 and 9-16 are allowed; and, that claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Takahashi et al. (US 5392148), and that claims 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Niki (US 5812933).

Without admitting the propriety of the rejection of claims 4-8, Applicant has for business and financial reasons separate from considerations of patentability, cancelled claims 4-8 without prejudice to pursue such claims and/or amended versions of such claims in a related continuation or divisional patent application, so that the allowed claims may pass to issue as soon as possible.

Applicant has reviewed the comments made by the examiner under the Allowable Subject Matter heading and notes that for the reasons given as well as for other reasons not recited in the Allowable Subject Matter paragraphs the claims are allowable. Applicant particularly notes that the claims include many features and/or elements and that not all features or elements are required to provided the requisite utility, novelty, and inventive step or non-obviousness over the cited prior art. Applicant therefore submits that variations of the claims having different or fewer elements may also be patentable over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims of record (Claims 1-3 and 9-16) are allowable and that the application should be passed to issue. Should the Examiner believe that the application is not in a condition for allowance and that a telephone interview would help further prosecution of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the phone number below.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees that may be due as a result of filing this amendment, including additional claims fees not already paid for, fees for Petition for Extension of Time, or other fees that have not been separately paid, to Deposit Account 50-2207 (Order No. A-69338 (465608-10)).


Appl. No. 09/852,469
Amdt. dated April 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 3, 2005

Applicant submits the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification of such is respectfully requested. If after review, the Examiner feels there are further unresolved issues, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (650) 838-4367.

Respectfully submitted,

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